

GERMAN ATTEMPTS TO DIVIDE BELGIUM

BY CARL L. BECKER,

Professor of modern European history, Cornell University

Belgium has been the storm center of the war, and her fate at the peace will be the test of victory or defeat. Upon this unoffending people the German Empire laid its heavy hand, and during four years subjected it to a martyrdom that is but the fulfilment of a "specifically German way of thinking and feeling." As German philosophers have written in books, line upon line, precept upon precept, so in Belgium the German army has made manifest in deeds the Fatherland's "ritual of envy and broken faith and rapine." Not to have rescued Belgium from this living death would be for us a confession of defeat, and for Germany a substantial victory.

It is therefore a fortunate circumstance, auguring well for the future, that the allied and American Governments are of one accord in respect to Belgium. Without qualification and without dissent they have declared that Belgium must be restored; and the words of President Wilson may stand as the expression, in this respect, of the purpose to which all the enemies of Germany are committed:

"Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired."¹

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE.—In preparing this pamphlet I have used, as the foundation, the admirable work of Fernand Passelecq, *La question flamande et l'Allemagne* (Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1917). In addition, the books and pamphlets on

¹ Address to Congress, January 8, 1918, War Labor and Peace, 30.

The Imperial German Government has often stated its intentions with respect to Belgium. At the beginning of the war, in the ultimatum presented to Belgium on August 2, 1914, the German Government declared that, "in the event of Belgium being prepared in the coming war to maintain an attitude of friendly neutrality toward Germany, the German Government binds itself, at the conclusion of peace, to guarantee the possessions and independence of the Belgian Kingdom in full"; otherwise the "eventual adjustments of the relations of the two states to each other must be left to the decision of arms."¹ Two days later, in his speech before the Reichstag on August 4, the chancellor, Bethmann-Holweg, defined the purposes of Germany more precisely, and more narrowly. He said:

Gentlemen, we are now defending ourselves in circumstances of extreme necessity (*wir sind jetzt in der Notwehr*), and necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg, have perhaps already set foot on Belgian territory. Gentlemen, that is contrary to the rules of international law (*das widerspricht den Geboten des Völkerrechts*). . . . We were forced to disregard the legitimate protest of the Luxemburg and the Belgian Governments. The wrong—I speak openly—the wrong that we are thus doing, we will try to make good again as soon as our military end is attained.²

Such was the expressed purpose of the German Government at the opening of the war. Meantime, the German army overran and conquered the greater part of Belgium. It did more. As a necessary part of attaining their military ends, the Germans in-

Belgium in the offices of the American Historical Review, material compiled by Professor Van den Ven for the Belgian Information Service, extracts made from the German newspapers by Richard Jente for the Committee on Public Information, and official dispatches of Brand Whitlock, American minister to Belgium, under date of August 10, 1917, February 3 and 23, March 6, 13 and 27, 1918, together with a number of documents transmitted with these dispatches, have been placed at my disposal.

¹ *Collected Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War* (London, 1915), 310. Miscellaneous No. 10 (1915), Cd. 7860.

² The German text from the official Reichstag reports, for this part of the speech, together with a translation, is printed in J. R. O'Regan, *The German War of 1914*, 49. Aside from three slight changes, I have followed Mr. O'Regan's translation. The original speech was published for propagandist purposes in *Der Kriegsausbruch 1914* (Berlin, 1914), 11.

stituted in Belgium a reign of terror such as has not been known among civilized nations. Nothing was omitted that might serve to break the spirit of the people. The record of senseless crimes and cruelties, of bestial acts, of nameless obscenities and revolting savagery which must be charged to the account of the German army in Belgium recalls those deeds by which "the Huns, under their king Attila, a thousand years ago, made a name for themselves which is still mighty in tradition and story."

PROMISES NO LONGER BINDING

After the conquest and spoliation of Belgium, the promises which the German Government had formerly made were thought to be no longer binding. "The conquest of Belgium has simply been forced upon us," said Freiherr von Bissing, the German governor general of Belgium. "I will not discuss the views of those who dream that the German Government is bound by the declaration made at the beginning of the war."¹ In its subsequent declarations of policy, the German Government has accordingly held a different language from that used by Bethmann-Hollweg on August 4, 1914.

These subsequent official declarations of policy in respect to Belgium were in substance much the same; and it will be sufficient to quote the last of them—the latest and the most precise—that of Chancellor von Hertling, before the Main Committee in the Reichstag, on July 11, 1918:

That we do not contemplate holding Belgium in possession permanently—that has been our policy from the beginning of the war. As I said on November 29, the war has been for us, from the very beginning, a war of defense and not a war of conquest. The invasion of Belgium was a necessity forced upon us by the conditions of war. In the same way, the occupation of Belgium was a necessity forced upon us by the war. . . . Belgium, in our hands, is a pledge for future negotiations. A pledge signifies security against known dangers, which one may avoid by having this pledge in his hand. One surrenders this pledge, therefore, only when

¹General von Bissing's Testament: a Study in German Ideals (London, Fisher Unwin, 1917), 24.

these dangers are removed. The Belgian pledge therefore signifies for us that we must guard ourselves in the peace negotiations, as I have already pointed out, against the danger of Belgium ever again becoming the deploying ground of our enemies: not only in a military sense, Gentlemen, but also in an economic sense. We must guard ourselves against the danger of our becoming, after the war, economically isolated (*abgeschnürt*). By virtue of her relations, her position and her entire development, Belgium is assigned to Germany. If we enter into close economic relations with Belgium in the economic sphere, that is also wholly in the interest of Belgium herself. If we succeed in establishing close economic ties with Belgium, if we succeed in coming to an understanding with Belgium in respect to political questions which touch the vital interests of Germany, we have the certain prospect that we shall thereby have the best security against the future dangers which might threaten us from England and France by way of Belgium or in respect to Belgium.¹

¹ *Preussische Kreuzzeitung*, July 15, 1918. The most important earlier official statements of German policy with respect to Belgium are the following:

"We will obtain sure guaranties in order that Belgium should not become a vassal state of England and France and should not be used as an economic and military bulwark against Germany." (Bethmann-Hollweg in the Reichstag, April 5, 1916; taken from Passelecq, "Belgian Unity and the Flemish Movement," *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1916.)

"Point seven has to do with the Belgian question. Concerning the Belgian question, my predecessors have repeatedly declared that at no time during the war has the forcible incorporation (*Angliederung*) of Belgium with Germany formed a part of the program of German policy. The Belgian question belongs to that complex of questions, the details of which are to be arranged by war and peace negotiations (*durch die Kriegs- und Friedensverhandlungen zu ordnen sein werden*). So long as our opponents do not unreservedly take the position that the territorial integrity of the Central Powers is the sole possible basis of peace discussions, I must adhere to the standpoint hitherto always taken, and decline to exclude the Belgian affair from the general discussion." (Hertling in the Reichstag, January 24, 1918, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, January 25, 1918.)

"From this rostrum it has been repeatedly affirmed that we do not contemplate retaining Belgium, that we do not contemplate making the Belgian state an integral part of the German Empire, but that, as was pointed out in the Papal note of August 1 of last year, we must be safeguarded against the danger that a country, with which we wish after the war to live once more in peace and friendship, should become the object or the center of hostile machinations. The means by which this end is to be attained, and the cause of universal peace thereby served, ought to be discussed in a circle of that kind [referring to the unofficial suggestion of Walter Runciman in the House of Commons that it would be well if responsible representatives of the belligerent powers should get together in an intimate meeting for discussion]. If, therefore, a proposal looking in that direction should come from the opposite side—for example, from the Belgian Government at Havre—we would not assume an attitude of rejection, even if the discussion could at first, as is self-evident, be only tentative." (Hertling in the Reichstag, February 25, 1918, *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 26, 1918.)

Germany's officially proclaimed policy in Belgium therefore amounted to this: Germany did not intend to annex Belgium; but she intended to use it as a pledge, or pawn, to obtain "guaranties" against England and France. How did she intend to use it? What were the guaranties? Much light is thrown on these questions by the administrative policy which Germany had carried out in Belgium since the war began. If we may judge from her conduct in Belgium, the purpose of the German Government was to destroy the Belgian state and to dissolve the Belgian nation. If her measures had succeeded, there would be no Belgium.

I. THE FLEMISH QUESTION

In recent years the Germans have adopted the theory that there never has been any Belgian nation, but only a Belgian state, which is an "artificial creation of European diplomacy," dating from the year 1830. The Germans say that this artificial creation, which is largely the work of English and French machinations, was already tending toward dissolution before the war, and that the inevitable result of the war will be to complete the process. This theory is fundamentally false; but the facts of Belgian history and the facts of Belgian social life, regarded in a purely external way, furnished the Germans with a basis sufficient for their very practical purposes.

It is true that before 1830 Belgium was never an independent state. In the middle ages the country now included in Belgium and Holland was a group of feudal principalities and chartered cities, more or less independent of each other, and commonly distinguished from the outside world by the collective term "Low Countries"—Netherlands. In the 15th century the Netherlands came under the suzerainty of the Dukes of Burgundy; as parts of the Burgundian possessions they passed to the Hapsburgs; and finally, when the Spanish and Austrian territories of Charles V were divided in 1556, they went with Spain to Philip II.

A distinguishing characteristic of the people of the Netherlands, in all this early history, was the stubbornness with which they

defended their local franchises. The city of Ghent was so intractable that it came to be known as the *Cité Ardente*—the “Fiery City”—“Pig-headed Gantois,” Charles the Bold called the burghers on one occasion. And so Philip II found them still in the latter part of the 16th century when he attempted to subject them to the direct control of the Spanish crown. They were so pig-headed that even the Duke of Alva, no mean artist in the application of *Schrecklichkeit*, backed up by the best troops in Europe, failed to accomplish that object. The northern (Dutch) Netherlands finally won complete independence in 1648, while the southern Netherlands (Belgium) remained under Spanish control but were allowed to retain their former privileges.

The southern Netherlands might have won independence at this time also if they had been willing to join with the northern provinces. This they were unwilling to do precisely because they were already conscious of being a distinct people, differing in many respects from the Dutch. They were altogether Catholic in religion, while the Dutch were Protestant; and they were mainly an agricultural and industrial people, while the Dutch were chiefly commercial. It was at this time that the term Belgium, *Belgique*, which may be sometimes found in medieval manuscripts, was much used to distinguish the southern Netherlands; and even at this early date the Belgians not infrequently referred to their little country as the *Patrie*. And so the southern Netherlands preferred, on condition of retaining their local privileges, to remain under Spanish rule, rather than join the Protestant and commercial republic of Holland.

BELGIAN DETERMINATION TO BE INDEPENDENT

Under Spanish rule they remained until 1713, when they were transferred, as a result of war and treaties, to Austria. At that time their local franchises were again confirmed in the Treaty of the Barriers and in a charter known as “The Joyous Entry of Charles VI.” When, in 1788, Joseph II attempted to abolish this charter, and to incorporate Belgium into a centralized and imperial administrative system, the Belgians rebelled; and although the rebellion was suppressed, the charter was finally restored. Mean-

time, the French Revolution had broken out, and in 1792-1794 Belgium was conquered by the French armies and annexed to the French Republic.

If the Belgians had to choose some country to be annexed to, that country would undoubtedly be France. In almost every respect the Belgians have more in common with the French than with any other people: their political ideas and institutions are similar to those of France; their religion is the same; the great European currents of intellectual and spiritual life that have shaped their art and literature have come to them mainly by way of France. Nevertheless, during the 20 years when the Belgians were under French control, and in spite of the fact that they enjoyed the same institutions and privileges that all Frenchmen enjoyed, they were never reconciled. They still considered themselves Belgians, and not Frenchmen; still persisted in the desire to live their own life and govern themselves in their own way; and in 1815, when the empire of Napoleon was overthrown, their wish was to be allowed to establish an independent Belgian state.

This privilege the great powers assembled at the Congress of Vienna, concerned less with the wishes than with the uses of small nations, refused to grant; and, in order to establish a strong "barrier" state on the lower Rhine against future French aggression, Belgium, against its will, was joined with Holland to form the Kingdom of Holland under the Dutch king. This new kingdom was indeed an "artificial creation of European diplomacy," and as such was destined to disappear. After 15 years of unhappy strife, the Belgians revolted in July, 1830, and with the aid of France and England won their independence. A constitutional convention, elected by the people, adopted the Constitution of 1830, which provided for a popular and liberal form of government. The independence of Belgium was recognized by the great powers in 1830 at the London Conference, and again in 1839 when it was agreed by Austria, Prussia, France, Great Britain and Russia that Belgium should "form an independent and perpetually neutral state."

These are the outstanding facts of Belgian history; and the Germans, having studied Belgian history, doubtless with their

customary patience and exactness, came to the conclusion that the Belgian state is "an artificial creation of European diplomacy." This conclusion is, however, closely connected with the other half of the German theory, namely, that there is no Belgian nation; and this idea they derive mainly from the contemporary conditions of Belgian social structure.

The basic fact of the Belgian social structure, which the Germans know but do not understand, is that the population is made up in about equal parts of the Walloons who speak one language, and the Flemish who speak another. The Walloons, who number something over three millions and live in the southern part of Belgium, speak essentially Romance dialects and employ French as a literary language; while the Flemish, who number over four millions and live in the northern part of Belgium, employ a language (Flemish) which in its dialect and written forms is essentially the same as Dutch. Practically all educated Belgians (871,228, according to the census of 1910) speak both the Walloon (French) and the Flemish (Dutch) languages; while a considerable number (52,547) speak these two languages and German beside.

USE OF EITHER LANGUAGE OPTIONAL

The legal status of languages in Belgium is defined in the Constitution of 1830, in Art. 23:

The employment of the languages used in Belgium is optional; it can be regulated only by law, and solely for the acts of public authority and for judicial affairs.¹

After 1830, when Belgium won independence from Holland, there was naturally a strong reaction against everything Dutch; and so it happened that until about 1870 law and practice combined to favor the use of French. The laws were debated, voted and promulgated in French; justice was rendered and administrative correspondence carried on in French; instruction in the four universities and in the secondary schools was exclusively in French. In a word, although nearly half the people spoke nothing but

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 40.

Flemish, and more than half were of Flemish origin, French was the language of public life, of society, of education and of literature.

Opposition to this state of affairs found expression in what is known as the Flemish movement, which has been an increasingly important question in Belgian politics since about 1870—that is to say, about the same period of time during which the Alsace-Lorraine question has been prominent in German politics. There is, however, this difference in respect to what has been achieved in the two countries: after 50 years the Alsace-Lorraine question is as far as ever from solution, while the Flemish question, at the moment when the war broke out, was virtually settled. Concessions to the demands of the Flemings were made as early as 1873, in the law providing for the use of Flemish in the criminal courts; and between 1873 and 1914 at least ten important laws were passed extending the use of the Flemish language in government and administration, in the army, and in the schools. In 1914 the question of a Flemish university was almost the only outstanding issue in the Flemish movement; and even this was practically settled, inasmuch as the legislature had voted in favor of transforming the University of Ghent into a purely Flemish institution.

GERMAN THEORY OF TWO "PEOPLES"

This division of the Belgians into Walloons and Flemings and the long conflict between them over the Flemish question furnished the Germans with a basis for their theory that the Belgians are not a nation, but in reality two peoples held together against their will by an "artificial" state constructed by England and France to serve their own interests. The Flemings, so the Germans said, belong properly with those groups of Germanic peoples, all of whom would naturally wish, and whose destiny it is, to be gathered under the flag of the empire. Like the Dutch and the German-speaking people of Switzerland, the Flemish are *Deutschen im Ausland*—Germans in a foreign land. Subjected to the Walloon yoke, they have long struggled in vain to emancipate themselves. It was therefore a duty laid upon Germany, a duty which

she was faithfully performing, to liberate this kindred people. This was the German theory.

The theory was not, indeed, so very old, not much older than the war; but during the last four years it had been solidly based and impregably buttressed by economists, historians, ethnologists, philologists and bureaucrats of the highest reputation in Germany. It goes without saying that the Pan-Germans, with their well known hospitality to divergent ideas, accepted it without question; and among the arguments which they marshaled in favor of German expansion, this humane theory marched valiantly side by side with the most robust ideas of *Realpolitik*. "Belgium became a state only two generations ago, never having been one before. . . . A national unity it has never known. . . . There now exists in the land a deep line of cleavage. . . . If a German dominion (*Oberleitung*), with the determined separation of the Germanic and Romance districts, were introduced, helping the Flemings in the schools, in the courts, in the administration, . . . it can be assured a ready acceptance and will attach to itself this Germanic part of the country more and more rapidly from year to year. . . . The task remains to save this *Kultur*, Germanic in race and in essence, from being covered and hidden by French varnish."¹ And finally, this theory, fathered by scientists and fostered by Pan-Germans, had been officially adopted and proclaimed by the government as the basis of its policy. "Germany cannot," said Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, speaking in the Reichstag on April 5, 1916, "abandon to Latin influence the Flemish people who have been so long enslaved."²

According to this theory therefore, although contrary to the general impression, Germany entered Belgium as a liberator. In behalf of the principle of the self-determination of nations, she undertook to break up the "artificial" Belgian state in order to "free the Flemings from the Walloon yoke." The means upon which she chiefly relied to attain this end were the transformation of the

¹ From the "Manifesto" of the "Independent Committee for a German Peace," published in *Das Grossere Deutschland*, January 27 and February 5, 1917; translated and printed by Charles Waldstein, *What Germany is Fighting For* (London, 1917), 76-77.

² Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 1.

University of Ghent into a Flemish university, the administrative separation of Belgium, and the establishment of an independent Flemish state.

II. THE FLEMISH UNIVERSITY OF GHENT

Before the war there were in Belgium four universities granting diplomas of equal value: two state universities, Liège and Ghent; and two "free" universities, Louvain (Catholic) and Brussels (Liberal). Until recent times the instruction in all four was exclusively in French.

As the Flemish movement gathered force, one of the chief points in the program of the Flemish party came to be the demand for an exclusively Flemish university; and in the last years before the war this was the all-important question at issue. The great importance (social rather than political or literary) which the Flemings attached to the possession of a Flemish university is admirably expressed in the following statement:

Wallonia is the chief center of those industries (metallurgy, mines and quarries, glass works) in which high wages and relatively short hours obtain. Flanders is the center of those industries (textiles) in which long hours and low wages obtain. This fundamental inequality can only be remedied by augmenting the productivity of the Flemish population, and thereby raising the general standard of living. To attain this result it is necessary to promote education, provide for superior technical and industrial instruction, and insure the spread of ideas and the diffusion of progress. This task belongs properly to those who have access to the universities and the centers of scientific research. . . . [But in Flanders] these classes do not speak the same language as the uneducated common people; their higher culture and their professional knowledge, finding expression in French, remain inaccessible to the people, because the people do not understand French. [To remedy this situation it is necessary therefore] either to substitute for the language spoken by the people—that is to say, Flemish—the language spoken by the

intellectuals, that is to say, French; or, conversely, to create an intellectual class which speaks the language of the people.¹

This, in a word, is the end aimed at by the creation of a Flemish university: to create an intellectual class which speaks the language of the people.

The creation of such a university was already assured before the war broke out. March 31, 1911, three prominent leaders of the Flemish movement prepared a bill for the gradual Flamandization of the University of Ghent. November 19, 1912, the bill was again proposed; and after thorough discussion in the sections (committees) of the Chamber, the *principle* was adopted—that is to say, it was voted to transform the University of Ghent into a purely Flemish university. This was the state of the case when the war broke out; and it was then, and is now, generally understood in Belgium that nothing remains except to work out in detail a practicable plan for effecting this transformation.

UNIVERSITY TO "LIBERATE" FLEMINGS

The Germans were scarcely established in Belgium before they hit upon this question of a Flemish university as an excellent point of departure from which to begin the "liberation of the Flemings from the Walloon yoke." In the spring of 1915, and again in the fall, the faculties of the University of Ghent were requested by the German authorities to resume instruction. In both instances the faculties declined; whereupon on December 31, 1915, the governor general, ignoring a vigorous protest by prominent leaders in the academic and political world, issued a decree for the Flamandization of the University of Ghent.

The task was assigned to a *Studien-Kommission* appointed in March, 1916, and composed entirely of Germans, with Professor von Dyck of Munich as secretary. A primary object was to enlist in the new university as many members of the existing faculties as possible. To this end, in February, even before the *Studien-Kommission* had been appointed, Dr. von Sandt, chief of the civil

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 280-282, quoting F. van Langenhove in the *Bibliothèque Universelle* of Lausanne for December, 1916.

administration, requested the professors in the University of Ghent to state "whether they were or were not able to teach in Flemish." Although very many of them were undoubtedly able to teach in Flemish, only eight replied affirmatively; the great majority made it clear, by the evasiveness of their replies, that they would take no part in any university, Flemish or other, that might be opened under the auspices of the German Government. The leaders in this movement of passive resistance were undoubtedly the two famous historians, Henri Pirenne and Paul Frédéricq. On March 18, 1916, Pirenne and Frédéricq were both arrested and, without trial, on the pretext of having violated their promise of loyalty to the German Government of occupation, were carried away to a German prison camp.

Some months later a second question was put to the faculties of the university, in the form of an invitation from the German authorities, in Flemish, asking them individually if they were disposed to begin instruction in the Flemish language in the fall. Seven members replied affirmatively. Of these seven, five only were Belgians; and of the two foreigners, one was a German. So far the prospect for a Flemish university was not bright. As Professor von Dyck said in his official report, "there would be one, or at most two professors in each of the four faculties." As to the character of the seven, they were, according to a good authority, men without distinction—"pedagogues of no more than mediocre ability."¹

TEACHERS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN

Meanwhile, the *Studien-Kommission* sought to obtain in Holland the teachers which could not be recruited in Belgium. A considerable number of Dutch professors accepted positions in the new university; but in his interesting report of October 20, 1916, Professor von Dyck admitted that "it was not easy to find in Holland the elements of intelligent collaboration. . . . It is only gradually that we have succeeded in securing for the University of Ghent a group of Hollanders who share our views." Professor von Dyck goes on to specify some of these "Hollanders" who share

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 145.

the German views. "They were naturally found among those who have hitherto sustained scientific relations with Germany. The Zoologist Versluys who, for eight years, studied at Giessen; a young chemist working at Leipzig; a philologist who obtained at Berlin degrees in science; a fourth, member of an ancient Dutch family, who is teaching at Berlin, in the Educational Institute. . . . I may mention also the Dutchman Labberton, *the well known apologist for the German invasion of Belgium*, whom we have been able to win over, not without having encountered stubborn scruples of all sorts. Finally, the distinguished Germanist, Kossmann, who abandons the fine position which he holds at The Hague in order to serve the Flemish cause."¹ Among the illustrious "Hollanders" who accepted positions in the new university, mention should also be made of Dr. Jolles, a naturalized German citizen of Dutch descent, who had served in the German armies in the present war, very probably on the western front.

STUDENTS GOT BY SCHOLARSHIPS

Students as well as professors were thought to be necessary for opening the university. No effort or expense was spared to obtain them. Young men who entered were relieved of many restrictions imposed on other Belgians; Flemish prisoners of war in Germany were offered their liberty if they would enroll; and 240 annual scholarships of 400 francs each were placed at the disposal of students who were, for one reason or another, without adequate funds to carry on their studies. Nevertheless, Professor von Dyck admitted in his report that "the number of students is still very limited on the eve of the opening of the university. We have to-day 40 students enrolled, and about 30 who have declared their intention of enrolling."²

The official report of Professor von Dyck was read October 20, 1916. On the following day the new university was formally

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 151. A useful pamphlet on the Flamandization of the University of Ghent is Kristoffer Nyrop, *The Imprisonment of the Ghent Professors* (London, 1917). For the attitude of the Dutch toward the "Hollanders" who accepted positions in the new university, see Chapter 7.

² Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 161. According to the *Kölnische Volkszeitung* of February 1, 1917, the number of students at that date was about 60.

opened. The Bavarian minister of education and many other high German officials assisted at the ceremonies, of which the chief event was an address by Freiherr von Bissing, the governor general of Belgium. In the course of his address the governor general said:

Laboring hand in hand with the Flemings, and well-advised by German and Dutch friends, the *Studien-Kommission* has negotiated the nominations and created the organization of the new educational establishment. . . . It is thus that Germans and Flemings work at a common task, in mutual confidence and with perfect understanding. De Raet chose as the motto of his first publication concerning a Flemish university these words: "*Two Valkyries, epic sisters, dominate the world—thought and the sword.*" An admirable decree of Providence has willed that these words, written in 1822, should in a singular manner be fulfilled at the University of Ghent. This university is born of the thought of many men concerned for the fate of Flanders during the years of struggle and suffering. The God of War, with sword drawn, has held it under the baptismal font. May the God of Peace show it mercy through the centuries.¹

By a curious coincidence, it was in this same city of Ghent, almost on the very day on which the God of War, "with sword drawn," was holding the new university under the baptismal font, that some thousands of Belgian citizens were herded into cattle cars at the point of Prussian bayonets and carried away into slavery.² These men may have consoled themselves with the thought that, although subject to outward constraint, it would presently be their high privilege to dwell in the land of "inner freedom."

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 164.

² Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 166; Passelecq, *Les déportations belges* (Paris, 1917), 25-27; Nyrop, *Imprisonment of the Ghent Professors*, 64. The first Ghent deportations occurred between October 12 and 21, 1916.

III. THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF BELGIUM

From the point of view of the German theory that Belgium is not a nation, but two peoples held together against their will, nothing could be more logical than the conclusion that the administrative division should be made to correspond to the linguistic division. It has never occurred to the Belgians to make such an administrative arrangement. The actual situation in Belgium is thus described by Fernand Passelecq:

The territory of Belgium has, on the map, the general configuration of a triangle divided, from the linguistic point of view, by an imaginary line running . . . from east to west, and crossing six of the nine provinces: namely, Liège, Limburg, Brabant, Hainaut, and the two Flanders. The part to the north of this line is Flemish, the part to the south is Walloon. The principal administrative divisions of the country, civil (provinces) as well as religious (dioceses), do not coincide with the "linguistic frontier." The provinces of Limburg, Antwerp, West Flanders and East Flanders are classed, in Belgian legislation on the employment of languages, as *Flemish* provinces; those of Liège, Luxemburg, Namur, and Hainaut as *Walloon* provinces; the (central) province of Brabant as *mixed*, because it comprises two Flemish districts (Brussels and Louvain), and one Walloon district (Nivelles). In fact, according to the linguistic frontier, the province of Namur is the only one exclusively Walloon, and the province of Liège the only one exclusively Flemish.¹

The Belgians have apparently never had any serious desire to change this arrangement. There was, indeed, in the years 1912-1914, a kind of "political gesture" in that direction. This movement did not originate with the Flemings, who are "subject to the Walloon yoke," but among the Walloon socialists, who were then complaining loudly of "the intolerable pretensions of the Flemish Clerical party." The truth seems to be that the Socialists, who are in a minority in Belgium as a whole but are very strong in

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 33.

Wallonia, perceived that if Belgium were divided into two autonomous countries, each with its own legislature, they would have an excellent chance of carrying in their own country the socialist reforms which they could not carry in Belgium as a whole. The Flemish movement offered them an excellent opportunity for executing a party maneuver. Asserting that the political division of Belgium was the only way out of the interminable language dispute, they demanded the transformation of the "unitary state into a confederation of two autonomous states with a single sovereign and a common (foreign) frontier." The movement does not appear to have obtained a very general support in Wallonia. It is possible that the Socialists themselves desired only to place a stumbling block in the path of the Flemish Clerical party. At all events the Flemings, including the Flemish Socialists, characterized the whole affair as an "artificial" movement in no way justified by the real grievances of the Flemings.¹

If the German authorities had really desired to meet the wishes of the Flemings, it would have been possible to find out whether they favored the administrative separation of Belgium by a very simple device: they might have submitted the question to the representatives of the people—the permanent Deputations of the Communal and Provincial Councils. This they neglected to do. Without consulting any responsible Belgians, and without consulting the Hague conventions (need one say?), the governor general issued a series of decrees dated February 25, April 22, 29, 1916, which modified the Belgian law of 1914 in respect to the use of language in the schools.² These changes, not perhaps very serious in themselves, mark the beginning of the policy of separation; and on October 25, 1916, a further decree provided for two

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 51-54.

² The series of decrees was promulgated in the *Bulletin officiel des lois et arrêtés pour le territoire belge occupé*, and the texts are available in Charles Henry Huberich and Alexander Nicol-Speyer, German Legislation for the Occupied Territories of Belgium, 7th Series, 115-140, 205, 226. The Hague provision referred to is Art. 43 of the conventions of 1899 and 1907, respecting the laws and customs of war and on land, as follows:

"The authority of the legitimate power having actually passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all steps in his power to reestablish and insure, as far as possible, public order and safety, *while respecting*, unless absolutely prevented, *the laws in force in the country.*"

educational administrative departments, with two budgets, one for the Flemish language and one for the Walloon (French) language, both under the ministry of science and arts but otherwise entirely distinct from each other. Similar ordinances effected a similar division in all other administrative departments, with the exception of the ministries of railroads, foreign affairs, colonies, and war. These were the preliminary steps in the administrative separation of Belgium.¹

Before the final step was taken certain events occurred which are not without interest from the point of view of high international comedy, and as an illustration of the working of the German mind in matters calling for a certain delicacy and finesse. The comedy was opened February 4, 1917, at Brussels, where about 250 individuals met in what was called the Flemish National Congress. This body issued a manifesto addressed to the Flemings and favoring the establishment of Flemish autonomy; provided for a permanent executive committee of 30 members, to be known as the Council of Flanders; and appointed a deputation of seven from this council to go to Berlin in order to arrange, in collaboration with the imperial authorities there, the details of Flemish reform.

In due time the deputies (with official permits in their pockets) arrived at Berlin; and on March 3, 1917, they were received by the chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, who made them a friendly address.² Adverting to the racial and historical influences that created an "affinity" between the Germans and the Flemings, and to the fact that for many centuries the Flemings had been "forced" to follow paths that separated them from their ancient kinsmen, the chancellor noted the fortunate circumstance that "to-day, thanks to God, in the midst of bloody conflicts, Germans and Flemings have become conscious that, in the struggle against the invasion of barbarism, the same road ought to lead us to the same goal." What the chancellor desired chiefly, however, was to assure the deputies that the Flemings, in their endeavor to emancipate themselves from the Walloon yoke, could count upon the active co-operation of the German Empire:

¹ Huberich and Nicol-Speyer, 7th Series, 161-174, 208-213, 246-247, 298-303.

² Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 3-4.

The governor general . . . has introduced preliminary measures tending to furnish for the Flemish people the possibility, which has up to the present been refused them, of an autonomous cultural and economic development. . . . I know myself to be in accord with the governor general in giving you the assurance that this policy, which is, as you yourself have urged, in conformity with the fundamental principles of international law, will be pushed with all the energy possible, and that it will be pursued even during the occupation, with the object of achieving a complete administrative separation, such as has been demanded for a long time in the two parts of Belgium. The linguistic frontier ought to become, as soon as possible, the dividing frontier of the two districts. . . . The collaboration of the German authorities with the representatives of the Flemish people will succeed in attaining this end. The difficulties are not slight; but I know they can be overcome by the disinterested collaboration of all those Flemings who have comprehended, in a profound sense of duty, what questions the love of country presents to them in this decisive epoch. . . . I salute your union as the best guaranty of the success of our work. . . . The German Empire during the negotiations, and also after the conclusion of peace, will do everything that may serve to facilitate and to assure the free development of the Flemish race.

GERMANY ENTERTAINS "FLEMISH DEPUTIES"

After this fraternal address of welcome the seven deputies were invited to meet Vice Chancellor Helfferich and other high officials at an informal evening reception, a *Bierabend*, offered by the chancellor in their honor and in honor of the Belgians whom they represented. Afterward an official banquet was given, which the seven attended as guests of the German Government; and, before they returned, in order to crown the festivities and perpetuate the memory of these pleasant days, the deputies allowed themselves to be photographed as a group, in company with a helmeted German officer, Count Harrach, chief of the "Political Division" at Brussels, who had throughout served as their guide and prompter.¹

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 206.

Prophets are not without honor save in their own country; and it seems that the distinguished seven, upon their return to Belgium, were less honored there than they had been at Berlin. This may have been due to the fact that they were less well known at home than abroad. A Belgian professor has described the seven deputies as follows:

“Of these delegates, supposed to be the flower of the Activists [a term used to designate those Belgians who lend themselves to German schemes] two, Vernieuwe and Verhees, were formerly minor officials at the central administration in Brussels; three others, Borms, Lambrichts and Tack, were formerly unknown teachers in the high schools; another, Dumon, is a physician who sells cigars; the seventh, Van der Broeck, a lawyer with no practice.”¹

These men, M. Passelecq assures us, were unknown as leaders in the Flemish movement; and Camille Huysmans, one of the leaders of the Flemish movement, describes them as altogether obscure men: “They are nobodies; they have no standing.” This may have been true formerly; but after they returned from Berlin they had a very definite standing, being pointed out everywhere as men to be stared at and spit upon in the streets, as men who had sold themselves to the despoilers of their country, as men who were to be no longer called Belgians but renegades—“individuals living in Belgium.”

OPINION OF REAL FLEMINGS

The “Activists,” under the most favorable circumstances, could perhaps rally to the support of the German program a thousand men—let us say two thousand—out of a population of seven and a half millions. Over against the opinion of this insignificant and nondescript group, it is interesting to place the opinion of the Belgian people, expressed upon every occasion and in every conceivable way by every kind of responsible group, but never better

¹ Belgian Information Service, *Release* of March 31, 1918.

expressed than in the protest addressed to Bethmann-Hollweg March 10, 1917, and signed by 77 of the most distinguished citizens of the country:

Excellency:

On March 3 you received at Berlin a deputation from an organization which styles itself "Council of Flanders," but which in our own country is altogether unknown. From communications that have been made to the press the impression is conveyed that this deputation has expressed the claims of the Flemish people, or of a considerable part of that people, and that it was itself composed of persons having some prestige and authority in this country. Nothing could be more dangerous than to allow, without contradiction, such an opinion to gain credit. The persons who, in the midst of war, have taken it upon themselves to offer to the German Government their aid in dividing the country and in radically changing its internal organization, have no right whatever to speak in the name of the Flemish people, and do not represent in any way either its desires or its aspirations.

Before the war, our Flemish populations designated, in complete independence, their representatives to the Chamber of Deputies and to the Senate, to the number of 113 deputies and 57 senators. Out of these 170 representatives, only two have joined what is called the activist movement.

The petition addressed to the Belgian Government, on the subject of the transformation of the University of Ghent into a Flemish University, was formerly signed by 2,000 university alumni. Only 100 have been prevailed upon to approve the new policy, and out of that small number several have already openly withdrawn their signatures, while others make no secret of the fact that they have been imposed upon, or that they were misinformed, and that they regret their action.

REAL FLEMISH MOVEMENT NOT REPRESENTED

The Flemish country and the Flemish movement have for years been represented by large and influential associations of a literary and political character, such as the *Willemsfonds*, the *Davidfonds*, the *Nederlandsche Bond* and the *Liberale Vlaamsche Bond* of Antwerp, the *Liberale Volksbond* of Brussels, the associations of workingmen affiliated with our three political parties, the Association of Flemish Lawyers, the Congress of Flemish Doctors and Naturalists, and many others. The adhesion of none of these

great associations to this anti-patriotic policy has been obtained; on the contrary, their heads and representatives have taken the opportunity to express themselves energetically against it in the Memorandum which they addressed to Governor General von Bissing under date of January 8, 1916, on the subject of the University of Ghent.

During recent years, no Flemish reform has been demanded by the Flemish populations with a unanimity equal to that with which they have asked that their rights be respected in this question of the university. A bill concerning the transformation of the University of Ghent was laid before the Chamber of Deputies by Flemish members to whom, in hundreds of meetings, the entire Flemish people had given that mandate. Of the six signers of that bill, five still live: all have protested against this meddling of the German power in a question that is exclusively internal; all are opposed to administrative separation.

Besides, we know the sentiments of the directors and editors-in-chief of the Flemish press who constituted, before the war, one of the great forces in the Flemish movement: all, unanimously, *are opposed* to this policy. Finally, and above all, our king, to whom we are all entirely devoted, our Government, which continues to keep our flag flying high under the protection of our valiant army, have unreservedly condemned the movement of the so-called activists.

These facts are established, and they suffice to reduce to its true significance that deputation of unknown men representing a council without a mandate. Besides, the very circumstances under which that council came into being are sufficient to deprive it of all authority. You doubtless are not unaware that in Belgium all associations of a political character have been dissolved by the occupying power; that the right of assembly is suppressed; that the liberty to express one's thought is forbidden under penalty of banishment or imprisonment; that distinguished Flemings, such as Professor Paul Frédéricq, Professor de Bruyne, Alfons Stevens, have been carried off to Germany; that of all the Flemish newspapers, mouth pieces of public opinion in our country, not one is any longer being published in the occupied territory. What value, under such conditions, would an impartial observer attach to the opinion of those for whom all these restrictions have been suspended by the grace of the enemy and who hold a language and commit acts that serve the policy of that enemy in opposition to their own king?

SEPARATION NOT FLEMISH PROGRAM

The division of our country into a Flemish administrative region and a Walloon administrative region is the end which these gentlemen pursue. As your own declaration states: "The linguistic frontier must become as rapidly as possible the limit of two regions united under the authority of the governor general, but otherwise separated *from an administrative point of view.*" Our response to this policy will be brief: *Administrative separation is no part of the Flemish program.* When, a few years ago, certain Walloons, in an hour of forgetfulness and without finding any echo in their own country, talked of administrative separation, it was with the consent of all the Flemings that one of the most radical among them made to the separatists the following categorical response:

"I assume here the authority to declare, clearly and categorically, on this solemn occasion and in the presence of so great a number of Flemings and of leaders of the Flemish movement belonging to all the religious confessions and to all the political parties: *Never before, not even in the darkest hours of the history of Flanders since 1830, has a single voice been raised in our ranks demanding anything which could possibly resemble administrative separation.*" . . .

Moreover, does your Excellency think that the reasons expressed so clearly in 1912 in the name of the entire Flemish movement have lost any of their force in 1917, after all that has occurred in our country? Do you think that we, Flemings, after our populations with admirable heroism have shed their blood and sacrificed their property in the defense of our flag and of our honor, are so blind as to accept as the result of this effort the division of our country, the parceling out of our nationality, in order finally, after an apparent and temporary restoration, to become the easy prey of ambitious and conquering neighbors? . . .

Your Excellency appears, furthermore, to have an inaccurate idea of the Flemish movement. Its object is not to resist the Walloons or France, but to rehabilitate, in the midst of our own Flemish country, our old and beautiful language, so unjustly ignored. Flemish Belgians are not a race forcibly incorporated in some great country. They are free associates in a free democracy. They are, in a general way, masters of their own destinies, and they have not awaited the intervention of the foreigner to obtain a redress of those grievances which they rightly complained of in the matter of languages. That fact is demonstrated by the following:

- The Flemish law of 1873 on judicial organization;
- The law of May 22, 1878, on administrative organization;
- The law of 1883 on official secondary instruction;
- The law of May 3, 1889, on judicial organization;
- The law of September 4, 1891, and of February 22, 1908, on the same matter;
- The law of April 18, 1898, on the publication of the laws, by which the equality of the two national languages was officially sanctioned;
- The law of May 12, 1910, on free secondary instruction;
- The law of July 2, 1913, on the army;
- The law of 1914 on primary instruction.

FLEMINGS WORK UNDER CONSTITUTION

Your Excellency can judge for yourself whether the peoples inhabiting Germany but not speaking the German language have obtained, in the same space of time, reforms of equal extent.

It is true that the work of justice and reform in the Flemish country is neither perfect nor complete, but the measures which are still lacking and above all those relating to higher education—we desire that they be carried, like all former measures, according to the provisions of our Constitution, and in complete independence—and we are firmly convinced that the common struggles and sufferings have served only to strengthen the secular ties that bind the Flemings to their Walloon brothers. Whatever shall have been done by the occupying power in the meantime, will, so far as we are concerned and by virtue of international law, be nonexistent from the day the occupation ceases.

It is true that your Excellency declared in Berlin “that the German Empire, *during the negotiations of peace and also after the negotiations of peace*, would do everything it could to facilitate and to assure the free development of the Flemish race.” We understand that *your* policy leads you to hold this language; but you will equally understand that the honor, the dignity and the patriotism of our populations admit of but one reply:

Never will we accept a peace by which it shall be permitted to your Government, or to *any foreign state whatever*, to meddle in our internal affairs. Let the war last as long as it may, the independence of our country must be the same after the war as it was before: *just as complete, just as genuine, and as much so toward the north and the east as toward the south: from no point of view, neither economic nor political, will we accept any subjugation whatever in respect to anyone.*

Excellency,

It does not enter into our intentions and moreover it is not within our power to begin, in time of war, an agitation concerning the project which we are discussing; but as deputies of the people, as heads of important Flemish associations and institutions, we owe it to truth and to ourselves not to leave you in ignorance concerning the real facts and our own sentiments.

In ordinary times thousands of signatures would be added to ours. At the present moment it is not possible for us to reach all of the signers of the protest against the intervention of the German authority in the organization of the Flemish University of Ghent. But all those who know our Flemish populations know that we have expressed the general opinion in a faithful and moderate manner. If your Excellency doubts this, let your Excellency suspend the restrictions that now limit the exercise of the right of free speech and the press, and, from the Ardennes to the sea, the attitude of the Separatists will be overwhelmingly disapproved, and our whole people will say to you:

All of us, Flemings and Walloons, have to-day but one wish, one desire, one thought:

THE BELGIAN COUNTRY FREE AND INDIVISIBLE!¹

This protest was ignored by the German authorities. They preferred to accept the declaration of the Congress of Flanders as the true expression of the wishes of the Flemish people. On March 21, 1917, General von Bissing accordingly signed the decree for the administrative separation of Belgium:²

There are established in Belgium two administrative regions, one of which comprises the provinces of Antwerp, Limburg, East Flanders and West Flanders, as well as the districts of Brussels and Louvain: the other comprises the provinces of Hainaut, Liège, Luxemburg and Namur, as well as the district of Nivelles. The administration of the first of these two regions shall be directed from Brussels; that of the second region from Namur. . . .

¹ Passelecq, *op. cit.*, 180.

² Huberich and Nicol-Speyer, *op. cit.*, 10th Series, 201-202; Passelecq, 5. August 9, 1917, a decree was issued providing that in the Flemish administrative region "Flemish is the exclusive official language" for all public authorities and institutions, including schools. Huberich and Nicol-Speyer, *op. cit.*, 12th Series, 583.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF FLEMISH INDEPENDENCE

As a protest against the decree of administrative separation, all of the heads of departments at once resigned. The German Government had deprived the Belgians of most of their rights, but one right it had permitted them to retain: January 4, 1915, the civil officials in Belgium had been informed that the German Government would allow them to resign their offices, if they so desired, without prejudice except, naturally, the loss of their salaries. Even this privilege was now withdrawn; and 14 officials who had resigned were immediately arrested and imprisoned in Belgium or sent to Germany for exercising rights recognized by the Hague conventions and specifically confirmed by the German authorities.

Meanwhile, the Flemish "Activists" continued to work, as Von Bissing had said, "hand in hand" with the German Government for the "liberation" of the Flemings. They organized meetings in those parts of Belgium where German liberty was maintained, and paraded through streets made safe by German arms. One of the most largely attended of these meetings was held in Brussels, November 11, 1917. It is said that 1,200 people attended, of whom one-third at least were Belgians: and these 400 Belgians, supported by 800 Dutch and Germans, bound themselves "not to recognize the Government at Havre . . . but to look to the authorities in control in Belgium, which alone have the power to create a Flemish state, to grant a people of German origin the same rights as Poland, and complete political separation."

Many people have thought the rights of Poland not wholly enviable; but the Belgian "Activists" were perhaps of a temper to be thankful for small favors. At least they must have known that the German Government was the chief dispenser of small favors, and the only authority from which men might still hope to obtain the "same rights as Poland." It was perhaps with this idea in mind that the Council of Flanders, on December 22, 1917, received the German secretary of state, Von Wallraff, at Brussels and requested from him the authorization of his master, the German Emperor, to effect a complete political separation of the

Flemish and Walloon provinces, with a German protectorate for Flanders.¹ The secretary authorized this to be done; and shortly after, apparently on the same day, the Council of Flanders proclaimed the independence of the Flemish provinces.² January 19, 1918, the Council announced that it would submit to re-election. On the day following, accordingly, some 600 persons, Belgians and foreigners, men, women and children, assembled in a Brussels theater and approved by acclamation, as a kind of *entr'acte* between speeches, the election of 22 deputies to the Council of Flanders and 52 provincial councillors.³ It was in this expeditious and happy manner that the people of Brussels, a city of 200,000 electors and more than a million of inhabitants, were permitted to express their will.

PEOPLE MOB FLEMING LEADERS

The greater part of the Flemish people were not content with obtaining, at least in this manner, the "same rights as Poland." Multiplied protests from public bodies flowed in upon the German authorities. Small groups of "Activists," attempting to celebrate the independence of Flanders, were mobbed in Antwerp, Brussels, Malines and Turnhout, in spite of the presence of German troops. February 7, 1918, the Court of Appeals in Brussels ordered the prosecution of "Activist" leaders; and two members of the "Provincial Government of Flanders," Borms and Tack (two of the famous seven), were arrested and arraigned for treason. At this point the German authorities intervened. Borms and Tack were released; three Belgian judges were arrested and taken to Germany; the Court of Appeals was suspended on the ground of having associated itself with political manifestations; and the Communal Councils were in future forbidden, perhaps in accordance with the

¹ Brand Whitlock to the Secretary of State, February 23, 1918; protest of the Belgian Senators and Deputies (no date).

² A declaration of the Council of Flanders of June 20, 1918, printed in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, June 25, states that the Council declared the independence of Flanders on December 22, 1917. The Belgian Information Service, *Release* of March 31, gives the date as January 14, 1918.

³ Brand Whitlock to the Secretary of State, February 23, 1918; protest of the Belgian Senators and Deputies; Belgian Information Service, *Release* of March 31.

principle of the self-determination of nations, to deliberate upon the question of Flemish autonomy.¹

As soon as the Court of Appeals was suspended, the judges of all the Belgian courts, from the Supreme Court down to the Justices of the Peace, refused to continue their functions; whereupon the governor general announced, March 26, 1918, that in order to assure the maintenance of public order, in conformity with Art. 43 of the Hague Conventions, "the military *Kommandaturs* are charged with the duty of repressing crimes and delinquencies." Early in April German civil and criminal courts were accordingly established in Belgium. In these courts the judges were Germans, and justice was rendered in the German language and according to the procedure of the imperial German civil and penal codes. It was announced that these courts would continue until such time as the Belgian judges might "enter upon their duties."²

Such was the state of affairs in Belgium. The "artificial creation of European diplomacy" known as the Belgian state has been broken up by processes natural and peculiar to the Germans; and the Flemish people, whose independence has been declared under the sanction of the German military authorities, are at last possessed of those rights and liberties which Prussian Poland has so long enjoyed.

V. GERMAN POLICY IN RESPECT TO BELGIUM

In all German discussions of the terms of peace in Belgium, the vital consideration, at least with those whose opinion carries weight in official circles, was this: Belgium must under no circumstances become an economic or a political dependency of France and England. To this statement, which is only another way of saying that Belgium must become a dependency of Germany, all parties were agreed.

¹ Brand Whitlock to the Secretary of State, February 23, 1918; Belgian Information Service, *Release* of March 31.

² Brand Whitlock to the Secretary of State, March 13, 1918; Belgian Information Service, *Release* of March 31; *New York Times Current History*, August, 1918, 333-334.

As to the means of accomplishing this end, opinion divided. The moderate opinion may be represented by Hans Delbrück, the distinguished professor of history at Berlin. Professor Delbrück opposed annexation, but he said that the "restoration of liberty" did not mean the "restoration of the state of things before the war." The *status quo ante* had been made an "obsolete proposition. . . . The administrative division between the Flemish and Walloon regions . . . cannot be undone again, and must have the most powerful effects. Even if, after we have evacuated Belgium, a certain reaction of the idea of Belgian unity sets in against the Flemish manifestos of independence, . . . nevertheless, when a movement of this kind has once been set going, it has a very marked vitality of its own . . . and will tend to prevent Belgium from becoming a mere dependency of the Anglo-French alliance."¹ These were the moderate views in Germany.

Over against the moderates stand the extreme annexationists, whose ideas are nowhere better expressed than by Freiherr von Bissing, the late governor general of Belgium, who has left us, in his political "Testament," a deliberate and reasoned statement of what he considered the "sacred duty" of Germany in respect to the future disposition of Belgium. Having discussed the great importance of Belgium for Germany, both in a military and an economic sense, he reaches this precise conclusion:

Belgium must be seized and held, as it now is, and as it must be in future. . . . *For years to come we must maintain the existing state of dictatorship.* . . . Germany is strong enough, and it is to be hoped that, especially after this war, she will have plenty of efficient men to do in Belgium, in a German sense, what unfortunately was not done in Alsace and Lorraine. Surely we shall have learnt from the mistakes that were made, and we shall never again have recourse to the vacillating policy of conciliation which was so disadvantageous, not only in Alsace-Lorraine, but also in Poland. . . . Half measures and a middle course must be condemned most of all.²

¹ *Preussische Jarrbücher*, February, 1917, quoted in Waldstein, *What Germany is Fighting For*, 23-24.

² General von Bissing's Testament, 15, 20, 24, 27.

Such measures would require patience, resolution and sacrifice, since no people "which has been appointed to play a creative part in the history of the world will find pigeons dropping already roasted into its mouth"; but such measures are necessary because "a restored Belgium, whether declared a neutral country or not, will not only be forced over naturally into the camp of our enemies, but will be actually drawn over by them." These were the extreme views in Germany.

GERMANY SOUGHT CONTROL.

The later policy of the German Government lay somewhere between these two extremes: it did not contemplate annexing Belgium, as Bissing advised; it did not apparently share Professor Delbrück's faith that the separation of Flanders and Wallonia would have a "marked vitality of its own" if German influence were entirely withdrawn. The precise object, as the German Government saw it, appeared to be this: to restore Belgian "independence," and yet retain a degree of influence in Belgium which would make it a military or an economic dependency of Germany. This object it hoped to attain by creating, during the war, a situation in Belgium which would enable the German Government, at the peace conference (in that *kleinem Kreise*—(narrow circle)—of which Chancellor Hertling spoke so often), to demand the continued separation of Belgium and Flanders, *on the ground that this was the wish of the Flemish people themselves*. Thus Belgium would be "restored"; and thus Germany would obtain its "guaranties" against England and France.

This interpretation of German policy is in harmony with Chancellor Hertling's official statements, and particularly with his last statement—that of July 11, 1918. It is borne out by the whole policy of the German Government in Belgium since the war began. It is particularly confirmed by a recent declaration of the "Council of Flanders" (a very reliable mouthpiece of the German Government), and by a semi-official comment on the declaration which was published in Germany at the same time.

The declaration of the Council of Flanders is dated June 20, 1918, and the essential parts of it are as follows:

Our Flemish people are a disinherited and oppressed people. The supremacy for centuries of a nationality essentially different from ours, has stifled in their descendants the heart beat of fathers who once enriched Europe with their superabundance of vigor and power. But the eye that is able to distinguish the character of our people, the ear that knows its voice, will now recognize that the nature of our people is again forcing its way to the surface. . . . In spite of the difficult conditions in which the occupying power finds itself, the German Government has made possible for the Flemings the realization of a great part of their wishes in respect to language, schools, and administration. The Belgian Government on the contrary has had only an arrogant "No" for all the wishes of the Flemish people. . . . Therefore, we all know that a Belgian Government restored to its former position of power, even if, at the time of peace negotiations, a golden bridge of beautiful promises to the Flemings were constructed, will nevertheless bring to us Flemings only Belgian hatred, to our civilization French ridicule, to our national life English tutelage, and to our economic life American capital with American creditors. . . .

Situated economically, politically and strategically at the threshold of Germany, Flanders knows that its independence is a real defense for Germany, but also that it can be realized only by German aid. This independence will be a secure and ever unassailable basis of our national life only if it is a political independence, with our own legislative bodies, our own government and our own judicial power, and making it possible for us so to shape our political, economic, and cultured development as the natural destiny of our country and people demands. In full consciousness of responsibility to our people, we therefore believe that the freeing of Flanders from every foreignizing force signifies also the freeing of Germany from hostile threat in the west.¹

¹ *Frankfurter Zeitung*, June 25, 1918.

This declaration, which bears on its face sufficient evidence of having been "made in Germany," was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* June 25, 1918. At the same time the *Kölnische Zeitung* published,¹ from a "special source," a communication which is obviously no more than an official comment upon the declaration. The essential parts of this communication are as follows:

This making of Flanders and Wallonia independent states would naturally not prevent these two countries from entering into a union with each other, which would make it possible for them to settle by a common legislation those affairs which especially require a common settlement because of the close economic relations between them. The example of Austria-Hungary perhaps shows a practical way. By such a settlement a "real guaranty" would be obtained for Germany, namely, that French influence would be actually suppressed in Belgium. In such an arrangement Germany will also have obtained one of the absolutely essential securities designated by Count Hertling in his speech of February 25, 1918, namely, that this country would not again become a strategical point of attack for our enemies. A free Flanders, built upon a Germanic basis, has as vital an interest as Germany in keeping French or English armies from its borders. . . . In the very nature of the case, however, such an independent Flanders needs in economic respects the support of the German Empire. Firm and definite articles in the treaty of peace must make this support easy and permanently secure. These articles must also include Wallonia, whose economic advantages neither Flanders nor Germany wishes to forego. Thus nothing will prevent the two countries from establishing and developing their own government according to their own will. No annexation, no Germanizing of Flanders under compulsion, but a free Flanders in close economic relation to the natural hinterland, Germany;—that is and remains the desired aim which will best serve the well-being of all concerned.

¹ Reprinted from the *Kölnische Zeitung* in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, June 26, 1918.

Such is the way in which the German Government was preparing to "restore" Belgium. From the Belgian point of view, which is happily the point of view of the Allies also, this is not restoration, but exploitation under another name. This would be, as Brand Whitlock says, "worse than the atrocities, worse than the deportations. They kill the body, this would kill the soul."

One of the dangers to which the world is exposed, says Vernon Lyman Kellogg, is that "the Germans really believe much of what they say." On the whole, this is perhaps the most serious aspect of the world conflict. The more one reads German writings, the more one reads, for example, the letters or the "Testament" of Von Bissing, the more one realizes that what he says is monstrous, and the more one is convinced that he really believes much of what he says. Between the facts as they are revealed in the history, the deeds, and the words of the Belgian people, and the conclusions which the Germans draw from these facts, there intervenes a "specifically German way of thinking and feeling" which is in great part an impenetrable mystery. Who shall disengage the various elements of brazen effrontery and sly cunning, of angular and unplastic logic, of massive but honest stupidity, of sentimental perversion, of naïve egoism and moral obliquity that enter into the German mentality? Perhaps the problem is insolvable; but somehow or other the Germans really believe much of what they say.

This does not mean that they are under any illusion as to the overwhelming opposition of the Belgians to their clumsy policy of conciliation. They understand perfectly the weakness of the Activist movement. "As soon as we remove our protecting hand," says Von Bissing, "the Flemish movement will be branded by the Walloons and Frenchlings as pro-German, and will be completely suppressed." This is the exact fact. The governor general knows it for a fact; but he finds that it does not properly follow from the established premises. The Belgians are two peoples, one of which, being of German origin and speech, must naturally wish to unite with the Germans; but the fact is they spurn the Germans. This is the fact; but logically it should not be the fact—it is somehow or other, and eventually, a cosmic

error. As the governor general contemplates this fact, therefore, he can only blink and say: "The character of the Belgian people is a psychological enigma."

The enigma, as M. Passelecq says, is "so simple that it takes a German not to understand it." In truth the "enigma" was long since easily solved by Ernest Maurice Arndt, a German contemporary of the Revolution of 1830. "The fundamental principle of the Belgian Revolution," he said, "that which gives it character and distinguishes it from other events of the same order, resides in the most intimate essence of the people. It is the aspiration to an independent national existence, . . . which, during many centuries, the Belgians have labored for."¹ But in speaking of national aspirations, we have to do with an influence of the moral and spiritual order—thus rising above the level along which the Prussian mind travels.

¹ *Revue des deux mondes*, June 1, 1918, 527, quoted from Van Langenhove, *La volonté nationale belge en 1830*, 93.

A VICTORY PROGRAM

At the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of World Peace Foundation, November 30, 1918, it was unanimously voted "that the World Peace Foundation approves the principles of which a statement¹ is here subjoined":

The war now happily brought to a close has been above all a war to end war, but in order to insure the fruits of victory and to prevent the recurrence of such a catastrophe there should be formed a league of free nations, as universal as possible, based on treaty and pledged that the security of each state shall rest upon the strength of the whole. The initiating nucleus of the membership of the league should be the nations associated as belligerents in winning the war.

The league should aim at promoting the liberty, progress and fair economic opportunity of all nations, and the orderly development of the world.

It should insure peace by eliminating causes of dissension, by deciding controversies by peaceable means, and by uniting the potential force of all the members as a standing menace against any nation that seeks to upset the peace of the world.

The advantage of membership in the league, both economically and from the point of view of security, should be so clear that all nations will desire to be members of it.

For this purpose it is necessary to create:

1. For the decision of justiciable questions, an impartial tribunal whose jurisdiction shall not depend upon the assent of the parties to the controversy; provision to be made for enforcing its decisions.

¹This program was prepared with a view to its being generally adopted by organizations by a special committee of the League to Enforce Peace consisting of William H. Taft, A. Lawrence Lowell, Oscar S. Straus, Theodore Marburg, Hamilton Holt, Talcott Williams, William H. Short and Glenn Frank. It was adopted by the Executive Committee of the League to Enforce Peace and by the League of Free Nations Association on November 23, 1918, and by other organizations. A joint committee for Massachusetts to promote a league of free nations in accordance with this program has been formed to conduct an active co-operative campaign.

2. For questions that are not justiciable in their character, a council of conciliation, as mediator, which shall hear, consider and make recommendations; and, failing acquiescence by the parties concerned, the league shall determine what action, if any, shall be taken.

3. An administrative organization for the conduct of affairs of common interest, the protection and care of backward regions and internationalized places, and such matters as have been jointly administered before and during the war. We hold that this object must be attained by methods and through machinery that will insure both stability and progress, preventing, on the one hand, any crystallization of the *status quo* that will defeat the forces of healthy growth and change, and providing, on the other hand, a way by which progress can be secured and necessary change effected without recourse to war.

4. A representative congress to formulate and codify rules of international law, to inspect the work of the administrative bodies and to consider any matter affecting the tranquility of the world or the progress or betterment of human relations. Its deliberations should be public.

5. An executive body, able to speak with authority in the name of the nations represented, and to act in case the peace of the world is endangered.

The representatives of the different nations in the organs of the league should be in proportion to the responsibilities and obligations they assume. The rules of international law should not be defeated for lack of unanimity.

A resort to force by any nation should be prevented by a solemn agreement that any aggression will be met immediately by such an overwhelming economic and military force that it will not be attempted.

No member of the league should make any other offensive or defensive treaty or alliance, and all treaties of whatever nature made by any member of the league should at once be made public.

Such a league must be formed at the time of the definite peace or the opportunity may be lost for ever.

BOOKS ON A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

(This list is supplementary to one published in No. 1 of A League of Nations, 51-53.)

- Bassett, John Spencer.** The Lost Fruits of Waterloo. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918. xx, 289 p. 19½ cm.
- Brailsford, Henry Noel.** "Foundations of Internationalism," *The English Review*, August, 1918, XXVII, 87-101.
Has-subtitle "The League of Nations Prize Essay."
- Burns, Cecil Delisle.** The World of States. London, Headley Bros., 1917. [vii], 145 p. 19 cm.
- I diritti dei popoli.** Rivista trimestrale per l'organizzazione giuridica della società internazionale. Direttore, Guiseppe Cimbali.
Roma, Tipografia del senato, 1917- . Quarterly. 25½ cm.
Vol. 1, No. 1, is dated May, 1917.
- Draft Convention for League of Nations** by group of American jurists and publicists. Description and comment by Theodore Marburg. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918. vi, 46 p. 17 cm.
- Dunlop, Hendrik.** The Supreme Will, or the danger of a premature peace. The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1916. [ii], 191 p. 20 cm.
- Frangulis, Antoine F.** "Une ligue des nations comme garantie d'une paix durable est-elle possible?" *Revue générale de droit international public*, XXIV, 437-451.
- Institutions judiciaires et de conciliation.** Rapport présenté par M. le Dr. B. C. J. Loder, . . . président de la commission internationale d'études No. v. La Haye, [Organisation centrale pour une paix durable], octobre 1917. 182 p. table. 22½ cm.
- Jacobs, A. J.** Neutrality versus Justice. An essay on international relations. London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1917. 128 p. 18 cm.
- Lammasch, Heinrich.** Das Völkerrecht nach dem Kriege. Kristiania, H. Aschehoug & Co., 1917. [viii], 218 p. 26½ cm.
- League of Nations Society.** Monthly Report for Members. London, League of Nations Society, 1918- . Monthly. 21½ cm.
No. 1 is dated January, 1918.
- Marburg, Theodore.** League of Nations. A chapter in the history of the movement. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1917. [vii], 139 p. 17½ cm.
- Marburg, Theodore.** League of Nations. Its principles examined. Volume II. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918. [iii], 137 p. 17½ cm.

Nederlandsche Anti-Oorlog Raad. Internationale Sanktionen. Haag, Martinus Nijhoff, 1917. 47 p. 23½ cm. (Zentralorganization für einen dauernden Frieden . . . Internationaler Studien-Kongress. Bern, 1916.)

Otlet, Paul. Constitution mondiale de la société des nations. Le nouveau droit des gens. Paris, G. Crès & cie., 1917. 253 p. 19 cm.

A Reference Book for Speakers, . . . Part I, The Things against which we are Fighting; Part II, The World for which we are Fighting; Part III, Keeping the World Safe. New York, League to Enforce Peace, 1918. 64 p. 17½ cm.

Sacerdoti, Adolfo. Progetto americano di una Lega internazionale per il rafforzamento della pace. Firenze, Tipografia Domenicana, 1918. 12 p. 21½ cm.

Taylor, Charles Fremont. A Conclusive Peace, presenting the historically logical, and a feasible, plan of action for the coming peace conference, which will co-ordinate and harmonize Europe, and the world. Philadelphia, The John C. Winston Company, 1916. 173 p. 17½ cm.

War and Peace—The International Review. London, The Nation.

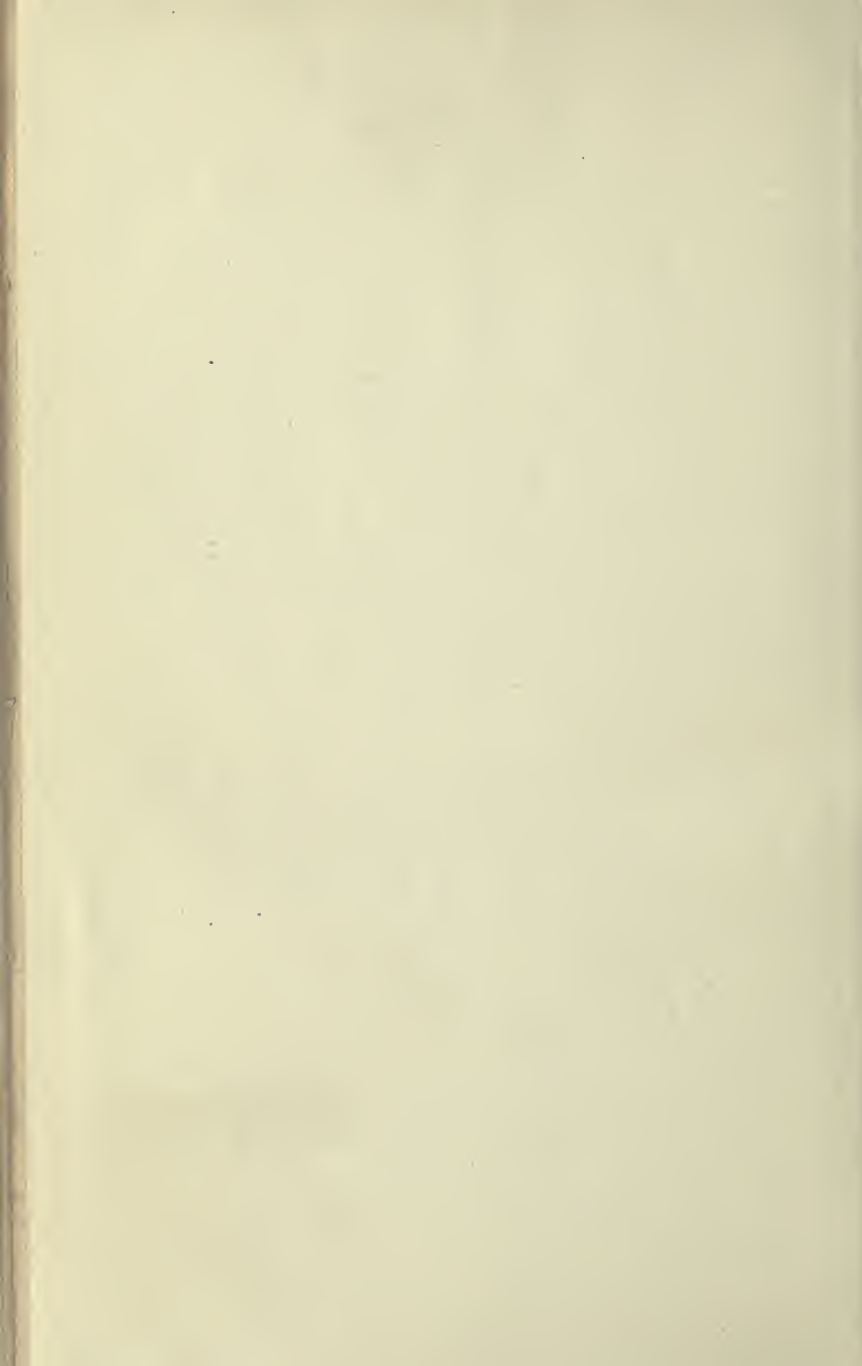
“War and Peace, which is published monthly, aims at contributing to the creation of a public opinion equipped for the major problem of the settlement and the succeeding peace. The proposal for a League of Nations will be discussed in all bearings each month by the most authoritative writers on the subject in Britain and America.”

Wells, Herbert George. In the Fourth Year. Anticipations of a world peace. New York, The Macmillan Company, 1918. xi, 154 p. 20 cm.

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The World Court. A magazine of international progress supporting a union of democratic nations. New York, The World's Court League, 1915—Monthly. 24½ cm.

Vol. 1, No. 1, is dated August, 1915. This magazine began publication as the organ of the International Peace Forum and succeeded *The Peace Forum* (1912-1915).



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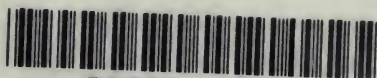
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